

[I was on my way home from Las Cruces]

Pioneer Kit Carson Horseskull Mine Picacho Peak

MAR 29 1937

1500 words

Marie Carter

Anthony,

New Mexico [Berino?]

Old Timers Dictionary

In

Detail

I was on my way home from Las Cruces, or the crosses, to Anthony, New Mexico, driving over U.S. Highway 80. Upon arriving at the town of Berino I decided to stop and call on a friend whom I had not seen for some time. When I drove up she was standing on the front porch of her charming little ranch house.

"Won't you come in and visit awhile?" she asked, in her low cultured voice.

"That is my intention," I assured her, "to visit and to chat."

As soon as we were comfortably seated in her sunny livingroom, I said:

Library of Congress

"Won't you tell me something about the early days of the Rio Grande valley?" [C. 18 - [?] N. Mex [?]?]

"Certainly," was the gracious reply. "For I love to talk about the early days. Also to recall how thrilled I was when I first saw this Great Southwest. But, then, I was only thirteen. The world looks pretty rosy at that age."

"Indeed it does," I agreed. "What year was that?"

"The year of 1885," she replied. "We lived in El Paso for a few months; then we came up the valley. My father was a cattleman. And my little mother, who was considered quite a beauty at that time, was the first school teacher between El Paso and Las Cruces."

"Had your mother ever taught school before?" I Inquired.

"Oh, no!" she said. "[H.N.?] Fleck, who was one of the school directors; asked little mother to teach."

"`Mrs. Harkey' he said, 'I wish you'd take that school up thar at Herrin's Station.'

""But Mr. Fleck,' I have never taught school,' little mother said.

""That don't make no difference,' he drawled. 'Accordin' to rules an' regulations, of you teach for three months without pay, the school's yours. You're so goldarn purty though that I'm afeared them boys will spend most of their time lookin' at you instead of their books.'

"Mother accepted the school, but when Mr. Fleck offered to drive her up the valley in his buckboard, she declined. The buckboard was all right, but she was afraid of his broncs.'

Library of Congress

They rared and pitched so much that he could hardly control them. So little mother decided to ride on the train."

3

The present town of Barlino, where Mrs. E. V. Gardner lives, used to be identified as "Linden." And the place where her little mother had the honor of being the first school teacher was known as "Herrin's Station." Not only grade school but Sunday school and church were held in one of the rooms of Mr. Herrin's home.

"I think Dona Ana County has some very interesting history," I said, by way of proceeding with our conversation.

"It has," my friend replied. "The old West is a never-to-be-forgotten epoch in my life. To be absolutely frank I don't want to forget it, for I was very happy. The old West was spectacular, but picturesque. My early impressions of cowboys with gingling jingling spurs, and Mexicans with gay sarapes are still very vivid."

"And how about horse-back riding?" I said.

"Oh, we all rode in the old days, but I rarely ever rode the range ponies," she replied. I had my own horse, a blue roan from Kentucky stock. My father had him shipped out from our old home in Missouri. We brought our grand piano along too. Mother thought it quite amusing for us to have a piano and to live in a jacal, or Mexican shack. We all enjoyed music. Mother and I played the piano, sister the guitar and father the [?] flute. Sometimes he played the flat cornet.

4

Library of Congress

I suppose you know quite a bit about Anthony, also," I ventured.

"Oh, yes," was the quick response. "I have been to many a pioneer party in your community."

"Good!" I exclaimed, "you're the very person I've been looking for. How many houses did Anthony boast of in 1885?"

"Three," she said. "Exactly three. One was an express office, the second was a store owned by the Marshalls, and the third was the "Hagan House," a place where people stopped, ate and danced. One of the parties I attended, and which I enjoy recalling, was given by Charley Miller."

"Oh, yes," I said, "Mrs. Story has told me about him. He was her neighbor, and ran the Valley Merqantile store."

"Yes, that was Charley,' she said. "In those days he was considered wealthy--he had twenty thousand dollars.' The Chief diversion of our parties was dancing. That evening our Christmas party was interrupted by a loud explosion. The girls were frightened, but the men rushed outside to see what it was. Some of the boys had found some powder and set it off as a practical joke."

"A friend of yours told me that you knew Kit Carson, is that true?" I asked.

"True! It must be, for Kit was my second cousin. We were very proud of him until he got married--Oh, you know how it is --he married the wrong person."

Library of Congress

Col. Christopher Carson, famous Indian scout was sent, to Fort Stanton October 12, 1862, to pacify the Mescalero Apache. In 1863 he invaded the Navaho country. He continued campaign till 1864, and finally forced the Navajo tribe to surrender by destroying their food supply and starving them out. Many of the old Timers knew Kit Carson and honored him for the part he played in conquering the indians and placing them on reservations.

"Mrs. Gardner," I said, "What you have told me about the early settlers of the Rio Grande valley is very interesting, but I'm afraid that I am going to impose upon your generosity a wee bit more. Do you happen to know any Indian stories associated with this locality?"

"Yes. The horseskull mine Horseskull Mine . It is a story that was told to me by an old-timer, long dead, a member of the Casad family of Canutillo. The Casads are fine people. Humboldt Casad can tell you more about the Brazito grant than any one else in the valley. For at one time his family owned a large [?] of it." she said.

"Thanks a lot. That's the very information I've been seeking. But now about the horseskull mine?" I inquired.

"Oh, yes. Well, a certain old-timer by name Frank Birch, was alone in his cabin. It was night, and rather late, when two Indians knocked at his door. Birch knew the Indians so invited them in and gave them some wine. Shortly the wine influenced the Indians to talk, and I suppose they felt that they owed the white man something for his hospitality, so they told him that 6 they would repay him by leading him to the Horseskull mine.' Concealing his eagerness to be gone at once, Birch, gave the Indians all the wine they could drink, telling them that he would be packed and ready to start by daybreak.

Library of Congress

"The snores of the two drunken Indians, wrapped in their blankets on the cabin floor, was the only sound that broke the midnight stillness of the room. Birch was still up, but sitting quietly in a chair, thinking of the horseskull mine, whose location no white man know. The Indians had guarded their secret well.

"True to his word, birch had his mules packed, and ready to leave by daybreak. The Indians, however, were not quite so drunk, and not overly-anxious to go. For during the night it had rained, and the morning was dark and misly."

" Which way did they go?" I inquired.

"Due south, then west; they were headed toward Mt. Riley --north of El Paso. Their progress was slow, for the roads were rough, and the weather had changed. In fact it was so cold that they thought they would freeze before reaching their destination. And the Indians, although still in the lead, had grown sullen and reticent, and by the time they reached the mine had changed their minds, deciding not to betray their tribe by divulging their secret of the `Horseskull' to the white man.

"Then what happened?" I asked.

7

"Well, to begin, they camped for the night, but suffered from the extreme cold weather. And the following morning, when Birch awoke, he made a dreadful discovery. The pack mules with all of their provisions were gone; also one of the Indians, whom he had grave reasons to suspect had cut the ropes, released the mules, then [beaten?] hasty retreat back to town. Taking the other Indian with him, Birch went in search of the mules, and

Library of Congress

brought them back to camp. But exposure and lack of food had weakened him to such an extent that the Indian grew alarmed, and offered to return to town for help.

"Of course he succeeded," I observed.

"Yes. The Indian found Birchs' partner, who took a party of men and set out to rescue his friend. Upon arriving in camp, however, they found Birch almost beyond the help of man; and the mules, rebelling, had naved their own ropes and strayed away again.

"Was Birch revived?" I inquired.

"Yes, to such an extent that he took all of the men, except his partner, and went in search of the run-away-mules."

"Did they find them?" was my next question.

"Yes. But upon returning to camp they found something else."

"The Horseskull Mine!" I exclaimed.

"No! The dead body of the man they had left in camp."

8

Since time unknown, men have lost their lives, searching for gold. From birth the Indian was a ferret, ever looking and finding, treasures overlooked by the white man. Some of the old-timers in this vicinity, firmly believe, that there is many a buried treasure in the caves of our mountains, waiting to be unearthed by men.

Library of Congress

There are current stories about hidden by the early Spanish Explorers; gold hidden by outlaws, and by Indians. We all know that the story of a find is much like a chain letter. The more it circulates the larger it grows, until finally we begin to question its verity.

Take El Picacho, or Picacho Peak for instance. I see it this moment from my north window, clearly etched against the blue of the sky. Not so very long ago, two young men while exploring Picacho, unearthed a brass pot filled with coins. By the time the discovery had been relayed from one person to another, the money found, had become a fortune. When I asked one old-timer if the cache, or treasure was very large, he exclaimed:

"Large! I'll say it was. The sheriff had to protect it with an armed guard till the truck arrived."

Mrs. E.V. Gardener: Born in Columbia, Missouri, March 15, 1872; moved with parents to El Paso Texas.; remained in El Paso eighteen months; moved up the Rio Grande valley in 1885; located at Linden, New Mexico (now Berino) New Mexico). Father was L.C. Harkey, cattleman; mother was Eleanor Virginia Harkey, first school teacher between El Paso and Las Cruces.